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On the whole M. Holleaux's case seems to us well established. It is not alone in prehistoric times that we have been inferring too readily the existence of political and commercial areas from the existence of cultural areas. Distance is an historic factor that needs to be appraised anew for each successive generation.

W. S. FERGUSON.

A Large Estate in Egypt in the Third Century B. C.: a Study in Economic History. By MICHAEL ROSTOVITZ, Professor of History. [University of Wisconsin. Studies in the Social Sciences and History, VI.] (Madison: the University. 1922. Pp. xi, 209. \$2.00.)

IN 1915 an important group of Greek papyri was discovered at the village of Kharabet el Gerza in the Fayum in Egypt, taken from the correspondence files of a Greek named Zenon. These have gradually been coming into the hands of the editors of papyri in the Cairo museum and in other museums and libraries in Europe and England. One of the letters was recently obtained by Professor Francis W. Kelsey for the important collection which he has built up at the University of Michigan. Already some three hundred and fifty letters from the files of Zenon have been read and published by competent papyrologists and many others are soon to appear. Over a hundred more are known to be still in the hands of the dealers in papyri. The entire correspondence centres about a single man, this Greek from Caria named Zenon, who was an important secondary figure in Ptolemaic Egypt in the middle of the third century B. C. The unusual importance of the "Zenon papyri" lies in the fact that the third century before Christ was the great constructive period of the Ptolemaic régime and that our previous knowledge of the internal activities and methods of the able Ptolemies of just that century had not been clarified because of the lack of available information.

With full knowledge of the probability that the evidence of the unpublished materials of the Zenon group might well change many details of his work, Professor Rostovtzeff of the University of Wisconsin has attempted a reconstruction of the activities of Zenon as displayed in the letters and other documents already available, in a study which he calls *A Large Estate in Egypt in the Third Century B. C.* The result is a most interesting and most valuable addition to our knowledge of the economic life of that important country and period, happily of the wider scope indicated in the subtitle of the book, "A Study in Economic History".

Zenon appears in full light in the year 258 B. C. as a personal agent in the impressive court of the finance minister of Egypt, one Apollonius. This was the time in which the great engineering project of Ptolemy Philadelphus for reclamation of land in the Fayum was in full swing. In 256 B. C. Zenon had become the chief economic manager of the

affairs of Apollonius. In particular he became director of some 6500 acres of land which Apollonius had received in "gift" from King Philadelphus. Zenon was occupied with the many tasks entailed by the establishment of the irrigation system in this large area and the direction of its agricultural production, along with the numerous industrial activities which were carried on within such an estate. With the death of King Philadelphus in 247 B. C., the great finance minister Apollonius disappeared. But the letters of Zenon do not cease. Rostovtzeff conjectures that Apollonius died in the same year as Philadelphus and that his "gift estate" then reverted to the new king. Zenon, however, remained at Philadelphus in the Fayum where the "gift estate" lay, enjoying as a private capitalist the profits accumulated in his ten years' service as agent of the great Apollonius.

This is merely the setting for the more important constructive ability which Rostovtzeff has shown in the chapter which discusses the general character of the "gift estates" of the early Ptolemies in their larger economic and political bearing; in the separate chapters explaining how the estate at Philadelphia was prepared for cultivation, what grains were sown, the important place of vine-growing, orchards, and market-gardening upon this particular estate; and in the one chapter in which Rostovtzeff's observations as to the stock-breeding, industry, commerce, and transportation on the Philadelphia estate are assembled. There are five appendixes containing other important by-products of the study of the Zenon papyri. Fundamentally the work is a study in agricultural history more than anything else. By this study Professor Rostovtzeff will have added greatly to the high distinction which his previous work has gained for him among historical workmen. The total result of the book is to confirm with a multitude of details his belief in the tremendous importance of the Greek talent for economic and political organization as displayed in the Hellenistic period. One may or may not care for "efficiency", but the Greeks had the gift of "efficiency"—along with other and greater qualities. To these greater qualities Greek "efficiency" did service.

WILLIAM LINN WESTERMANN.

La Ruine de la Civilisation Antique. By GUGLIELMO FERRERO.
(Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie. 1921. Pp. 253. 5 fr.)

It will not be safe to neglect this new book of Ferrero's on the theory that one can hazard a safe guess at what the author of *Grandezza e Decadenza* will say. There is here the same dramatic art as of old, the same fondness for crises and cataclysms, the same proneness to substitute *ergo* for *post hoc*, and the same desire to make history didactic, but the doctrine of economic determinism has vanished and the influence of Lombroso can be scented only in a rare cliché here and there.

The first few chapters tell very effectively, if partially, the story of a century from the reign of Septimius Severus to the death of Constantine.